



Mental Health Update January 12, 2007

Development of a Model Integrated Treatment Court in Vermont

The Vermont Integrated Services Initiative (Co-occurring State Incentive Grant, COSIG), in partnership with the Court Administrator's Office, is providing funding, training, technical assistance and evaluation to develop a model integrated treatment court in Vermont. Individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders are disproportionately more likely to be confined in a correctional institution, become homeless, become involved with child protective services, or lose state and federal benefits as a result of their disorders. The practice of addressing mental health and chemical dependency in isolation from each other has often resulted in longer-term, more costly treatment that may be less effective over time.

This Initiative recognizes that many people who come before the court have co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders and that identification and integrated treatment is critical to successful outcomes and recovery. Thus, in an integrated treatment court all persons will receive comprehensive screening, assessment and treatment for chemical dependency and mental disorders with the goal of keeping them out of a correctional facility.

Pacific Health Policy Group Awarded Contract

The Agency of Human Services announced today that the Pacific Health Group of Lake Forest, Illinois, has been granted the contract to conduct a second study on the financial sustainability of the Vermont designated agency provider system for mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services. The Pacific Health Policy Group conducted a similar study in Vermont during 2004, and was one of three consulting groups to submit proposals for the currently commissioned study.

The consultants will be meeting with a broad range of providers, state administrators, consumers, families and other stakeholders as well as gathering and analyzing updated data on the agencies' financial status, service utilization patterns and demographic trends. Significant Vermont public policy initiatives such as Global Commitment and the Integrated Services Initiative will also be factored into their analysis of the system's positioning and preparation for the future. The consultants will begin their work immediately with a target completion date of August 1, 2007 for their final report. The Pacific Health Policy Group's proposal can be viewed at:
<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/update/documents/pacificrfp.pdf>

Public Meetings for Local System of Care Plans

Several designated agencies are scheduling public meetings to get input from consumers, families, community stakeholders and citizens at large for their Local System of Care Plans for Fiscal Years 2008-2010. We are at the beginning of another major three-year planning cycle for Vermont's public mental health system. Input now can be an important factor influencing services and funding in the years ahead. Anyone interested in speaking up on local issues is invited to attend the following meetings:

<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/boards/documents/SystemofCareplansMelinda.pdf>

FUTURES PROJECT

Futures Advisory Committee

The next meeting will be on January 29th, 2:00 to 4:30 in the Skylight conference room. THIS IS A CHANGE FROM ORIGINAL SCHEDULE. The meeting date is being changed to the 29th to reflect Michael Hartman's official start date as Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health. In addition this change will facilitate discussion of the Governor's budget which cannot happen prior to the budget address on January 23.

Secure Residential

The work group met to plan secure residential services. The Division of Mental Health is reaching out to designated agencies to solicit interest in developing this capacity. The work group will be chaired by the program developer and supported by Futures staff.

Second Spring Community Residential Recovery Program

A Clinical Steering Committee planning for the transition of patients from Vermont State Hospital to Second Spring is developing guidelines necessary to begin offering VSH patients the opportunity to visit and try out the new residential program in Williamstown. As renovations continue in preparation for a March 1 opening, Roy Riddle, Program Director of Second Spring, has hired a human resources staff person and posted recruitment notices for other staff in Vermont newspapers. Family and consumer representatives from the National Alliance for Mental Illness and Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, respectively, joined the Clinical Steering Committee this week and will continue serving throughout the process to assure that family and consumer perspectives are considered.

Care Management Principles

Care management principles to guide the movement of clients through the system were developed and adopted by the Care Management Work Group last September. While full implementation of these principles will require more planning, the core concepts will be a part of the transformed system of mental health care. The Clinical Steering Committee for Second Spring reviewed these care management principles and decided to use them on a pilot basis to guide the opening and operation of Second Spring. As Vermont's first community residential recovery program, Second Spring will be ideally suited to pilot these care management principles.

Public Oversight Commission Approves Draft Report

On Wednesday January 20, 2007 the Public Oversight Commission unanimously voted to forward their draft recommendations to the commissioner of the Department of Banking, Insurance and Health Care Administration unchanged. At the meeting BISHCA announced that beginning January 22, Paulette Thabault will replace retiring Commissioner John Crowley. Since incoming Commissioner Thabault previously provided consultation to the Futures Conceptual Certificate of Need Application, Thomas Candon, BISHCA Deputy Commissioner for Banking, will rule on the VSH Futures Application.

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 54 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 53.